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PREFACE

The purpose of this manual is the prevention of injury, suffering, or death that may occur as a result of poor planning or preventable incidents at public events.

This manual is intended to provide guidance for the management of risks associated with conducting events that involve mass gatherings of people and assist planners and organizers in making such events safe and successful.

Details of the development of the manual and other related matters are noted in the Background section of the Introduction. The manual was sponsored, edited, and published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA has prepared this manual for use anyone planning or conducting a special event or mass gathering. This manual is intended to enable these people to become proactive in the planning for public events to ensure that adequate measures and systems are in place to prevent, reduce, and provide care for injuries, illness, and suffering which may occur.

Many people, in addition to health personnel, contribute significantly to the success of a public event. Therefore, FEMA anticipates that this manual will be distributed to event promoters, managers, public and private organizations, emergency service personnel, government bodies, and any individual or organization that contributes to the planning of events. Wide distribution is encouraged, providing individuals understand that the detailed contents of the manual are directed principally at managing the health and safety aspects of the event for all participants, officials, and spectators.

The manual is not intended to override any existing legislation or local emergency management procedures. Further, it does not seek to address the preparation of emergency response plans, but rather identifies the elements which should be considered by those responsible for planning and conducting events which attract large numbers of people.

Local governments and emergency services should be approached for more detailed advice on other aspects of planning and for the necessary permits and licenses required.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Throughout the United States, at any given time of year, there are festivals, concerts, fairs, sporting events, and many other large and small events that gather or have the potential to gather large crowds. Under normal conditions, these events go on with little or no problems. However, when something goes wrong either as a result of a natural hazard or a man-made hazard, then local emergency management becomes involved.

Multiple deaths and injuries at large public events have occurred consistently and over a wide spectrum of countries and types of events. Certain, highly competitive sports events, particularly soccer, and rock concerts and festivals tend to produce spectator-generated incidents, while air shows and auto races tend to produce more participant-generated occurrences.

In some instances, advanced assessment of, and pre-planning for, these events failed to occur, or when it did, failed to identify the potential for disaster, or mitigating or coping strategies for a major incident.

With this in mind, FEMA conducted a focus group workshop in which participants discussed real pre-event planning problems for an upcoming event. The workshop focused on a number of major areas, which, either singularly or collectively, have intensified the problems inherent in mass crowd-intensive events. These issues included such aspects as physical layouts, spectator management, public safety, public health, and medical care.

The workshop was not geared toward large, often national events (though the planning principles still apply), but toward the more “routine” special events that communities host, such as parades, fairs, concerts, and air shows.

The participants focused on the impact an event, a non-routine activity, would have on a community’s resources. They placed emphasis not on the total number of people attending, but rather on the community’s ability to respond to the exceptional demands that the activity places on response services.

The purpose of having a pre-event plan in place is to reduce response times and better enable agencies to improvise because they have discussed contingencies beforehand. A pre-event plan defines roles and responsibilities in advance and creates ownership of potential problems for agencies involved in the process.

This manual is designed for a wide audience, encompassing the range of personnel with a role to play in the development of a special event plan. Participants include those who have a general awareness of their own roles but do not have a previous detailed or extensive

Introduction

knowledge of special event planning. For example, the audience might include relatively new emergency managers, personnel from emergency operations organizations such as police, fire, medical services, and public works, and representatives from other community organizations—both public and private—for whom special event planning is not a regular responsibility.

SCOPE

The suggested guidelines in this manual have been developed from a number of sources, and most are applicable to a wide range of mass public gatherings. These sources focused on youth audiences attending large rock concerts and competitive sporting events because of the difficulties and major incidents historically associated with such events. Many of the guidelines derived from such experiences are applicable to a broad range of other events that present their own challenges.

Certain types of events have an inherent capacity for special management problems. While the general guidance given in this document remains applicable to these events, additional guidance is given for high-risk events in “Chapter 4: Special Planning for High-Risk Events” and for terrorist and criminal activities in “Chapter 5: Terrorism and Criminal Activities.”

In certain situations, such as visits by high-profile political figures or controversial activists, intensive security arrangements are necessary. Such procedures are outside the scope of this manual, and it would be inappropriate and counter-productive to provide details herein, given the wide and unrestricted distribution of this document. When such events occur, event planners must create liaison between emergency service personnel, health professionals, and appropriate security personnel to ensure that they address health, safety and security issues for the event.

SYNOPSIS

This manual covers a number of major areas, which either singularly or collectively, have historically exacerbated the problems inherent in mass crowd-intensive events. These areas include such aspects as physical layouts (including site, structures, and access), spectator management (including crowd organization, flow, and ingress/egress control), and public safety (including security, public health, and medical care).

Historically, advanced assessment of and pre-planning for an event failed to occur, or when it did, failed to identify the potential for disaster or mitigating or coping strategies in the event of a major incident.

Experience has proven that certain high-risk events, such as auto races and air shows, require particular planning in addition to the more generally applicable guidelines. This manual provides guidance for the particular planning of these high-risk events, as well as guidance to plan for terrorist and criminal activities.

Introduction

FEMA recognizes that no two events or situations are identical. While this document provides an approach to planning for and coping with special events, it does not provide guidelines that are universally applicable or without need of modification to the specifics of a particular event.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chapter 1 contains information concerning selection of the planning team, ordinances, regulations, and laws, and information concerning selecting a site for the event.

Chapter 2 concerns the risks and hazards that must be considered when planning an event.

Chapter 3 gives a basic overview of the Incident Command System (ICS) and how to use ICS in both the planning stage and when an incident occurs.

Chapter 4 discusses some of the considerations when hosting a specialty event that may be high risk.

Chapter 5 addresses terrorism and how to respond to terrorist threats and actions.

Chapter 6 explains the demobilization process and the importance of an After Action Report.

In the appendix at the end of the manual there are several checklists and tables to assist in the planning process.

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Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, Maryland

Marion County Emergency Management, Indiana

Weber County Emergency Management, Utah

Washington D. C. Office of Emergency Preparedness

Utah Division of Comprehensive Emergency Management

Columbia South Carolina Public Works

American Public Works Association

Acknowledgment is also made of the manual *Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings: A Health, Medical and Safety Planning Manual for Public Events*, prepared by Emergency Management Australia, and of the paper *Emergency Preparedness Guidelines for Mass, Crowd-Intensive Events*, prepared for Emergency Preparedness Canada by James A. Hanna, M. SC.

Chapter 1

Pre-Event Planning



CHAPTER 1: PRE-EVENT PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Planning any event is difficult. Planning for the potential risks and hazards associated with an event is even more difficult but essential to the event's success. If you want those who attend an event to have positive memories of it, you need to keep several things in mind. This chapter covers the issues that you should address in the very early stages of planning or even when you are discussing promoting or sponsoring such an event. Before you schedule the event, you should consider the scope of the event or mass gathering, the risks to spectators and participants, community impact, and the emergency support required (personnel and logistics). You should also identify the lead agency and members of the planning team.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EVENT AND MASS GATHERING

What does or does not constitute a special event or mass gathering is difficult to determine. Instead, guidelines may be used to define it.

A focus group discussing special events and mass gatherings has identified a special event as

a non-routine activity within a community that brings together a large number of people. Emphasis is not placed on the total number of people attending but rather on the community's ability to respond to a large-scale emergency or disaster or the exceptional demands that the activity places on response services. A community's special event requires additional planning, preparedness, and mitigation efforts of local emergency response and public safety agencies.

The focus group then defined a mass gathering as a subset of a special event. Mass gatherings are usually found at special events that attract large numbers of spectators or participants. Both special events and mass gatherings require the kind of additional planning identified in the previous quote. For example, an amusement park that attracts a large number of people is not considered a special event because large crowds are expected. A mass gathering does not imply that the event is a special event. Failure to prepare for all contingencies can lead to disastrous consequences.

This manual is not intended to offer preparation planning for large national events, but for the more traditional community events, such as parades, fairs, concerts, and air shows, and festivals. However, both types of events require the same kind of careful planning.

Pre-Event Planning

The title of this manual is **Special Events Contingency Planning**. What do we mean by contingency planning and where do we start? What distinguishes this level of planning from traditional public safety planning?

The first concern with contingency planning is to identify times when the event may place strains on the existing public safety agencies. Even in the earliest stages of planning, you should begin also to make contingency plans. These plans should consider licensing and regulations, emergency response issues, identifying persons responsible for particular types of hazards and risks, resources and expenses, and jurisdictions. Planning ahead reduces stress for organizers and promoters during the event, should an incident occur which requires public agencies to work together.

During the initial planning stages, each agency should review resources to ensure all necessary equipment is available. If the agencies determine any additional equipment is needed then they may acquire the equipment or supplies and be ready for the event. One way for communities to acquire equipment is to work together or pool equipment.

One way agencies work together is by adopting a program known as local mutual aid. This program allows neighboring communities to pool resources and share liability for damages or loss of equipment. If one community needs a particular piece of equipment, they may borrow it from a neighboring community. It will become an asset of the borrowing community and covered under their insurance until it is released and returns to its home organization. It is important that those involved in planning the event know the agreements established between neighboring communities and the assets available to assist in responding to any unforeseen incidents.

PLANNING MEETINGS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS/MASS GATHERINGS

Planning Team Identification

In general, planning a special event or mass gathering should begin well in advance of the event. One of the first steps to planning an event is to bring together those who are hosting the event with those responsible for the public safety within the community. A multidisciplinary planning team or committee should be comprised of the promoter or sponsor and any agency that holds a functional stake in the event (e.g., emergency management, law enforcement, fire and rescue, public works/utilities, health inspection, etc.). With all these agencies present, a risk of confusion in matters of leadership is obvious. We discuss the nature of this risk in Chapter 3: Incident Command and Control. Thus, the lead agency should be identified early on. In some communities, the lead agency for public safety planning is the emergency management agency. Consequently, emergency management should typically lead the way in coordinating the event planning effort.

Some communities already have planning protocols or systems in place. If your community has an existing plan that has already proved successful, do not start from scratch; simply change or modify the plan where needed. The incident command system (ICS) is a

Pre-Event Planning

management system frequently used to effectively manage large events. As such, event planners should consider using ICS throughout the planning process. It seems logical that the “Incident Commander” be a representative of the lead agency. It also seems logical this representative lead the planning team or committee.

All involved agencies need to participate on this Planning Team from the outset in order to ensure a successful and safe event. At its initial meeting, the Planning Team should develop its mission, objectives, and determine the necessary components of the public safety plan. For example, what elements are within the realm of the promoter and what are within the realm of the public safety agencies? The Planning Team should also develop its structure using ICS as a model (that is, section chiefs, and/or subcommittees, as needed). Additionally, the Planning Team should consider the promoter’s or sponsoring organization’s purpose and experience, risks (including crowd, staffing, food and shelter, parking, transportation, medical facilities), previous event concerns, relevant local concerns, weather, and community impact.

Pre-event planning matrix

At subsequent meetings, the Planning Team should identify all of the major functions and responsibilities required by the event and assign appropriate agencies to manage each function or responsibility. Since responsibilities vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, it is most effective to assign responsibilities consistently to avoid duplication and promote efficient response to problems that may arise. The pre-event planning matrix (below) is designed for you to choose the risks, hazards, or functions that are likely to be required by an event, and assign each to a primary agency (P) or a secondary or support agency (S). The functions and responsibility assignments must be discussed and decided in the planning stages, not when an incident occurs. Additional room is provided in the matrix to add agencies or risks/functions as they may apply.

Pre-Event Planning

PRE-EVENT PLANNING MATRIX

Since responsibilities vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, certain risks or hazards are not consistently handled by one agency. This matrix is designed for you to choose the risks and hazards your agency is accountable for handling and then go to the corresponding page in the Job Aid manual. If more than one agency is tasked to respond to the risk or hazard, some overlap of responsibility may occur. One way to handle this is to place a number 1 in the primary agency position and a number 2 in the agency that provides support's position. The responsibilities of each agency must be discussed and decided in the planning stages, not when an incident occurs. Additional room is provided in the matrix to add agencies or risks as they may apply.

	County Agency	EMS	Emergency Management	FAA	FBI	Fire	Law Enforcement	Public Health	Public Works	State Agency	U.S. Secret Service	Utilities	
Abandoned Vehicles (p. 23)													
Airspace Encroachment (p. 47)													
Assault on County Official (p. 58)													
Assault on Federal Official (p. 58)													
Assault on State Official (p. 58)													
Bomb Found (p. 101)													
Bomb Threat (p.101)													
Building Inspection (p 12)													
Cancellation of Event (p. 63)													
Civil Disturbance w/ Demonstration (p.15)													
Communications (p. 51)													
Credentials													

Pre-Event Planning

	County Agency	EMS	Emergency Management	FAA	FBI	Fire	Law Enforcement	Public Health	Public Works	State Agency	U.S. Secret Service	Utilities	
Crowd Control (p. 15)													
Demonstrations (p. 48)													
Dignitary Protection (p. 58)													
EMS (p. 44)													
Environmental Hazards (p. 45)													
Evacuation of Area													
Fire (p. 50)													
First Aid Stations (p. 42)													
Food Handling (p. 28)													
Food Waste (p. 34)													
HazMat (p. 49)													
Hostage w/o Terrorism													
Human Waste (p. 34)													
Kidnapping													
Lost Child (p. 59)													
Lost and Found (p. 56)													
Media Relations (p 22)													
Motorcades													
Parking (p. 24)													
Permitting (p. 5)													

Pre-Event Planning

	County Agency	EMS	Emergency Management	FAA	FBI	Fire	Law Enforcement	Public Health	Public Works	State Agency	U.S. Secret Service	Utilities	
Potable Water (p. 31)													
Power Interruption													
Security/Governor (p. 58)													
Security/State Department													
Security (p. 55)													
Structural Collapse (p. 12)													
Terrorist act (p. 95)													
Terrorist Threat (p. 95)													
Ticketing (p. 18)													
Traffic Control (p. 21)													
Weapons of Mass Destruction (p. 98)													
Weather Hazards (p. 45)													

Promoter/Sponsor(s)

The promoter or sponsor must be involved in all phases of planning to ensure a successful event. Often the promoter is interested in monetary gain more than he or she is interested in public safety. If this appears to be his or her primary goal, local agency participation is essential. You may encourage the promoter to cooperate by linking attendance at planning meetings with the permit process and issuance. For example, the permit to host the event may require the promoter's presence at the initial planning meeting. Teamwork promotes successful events.

One way to ensure public safety at an event is to follow relevant laws or regulations of the community. Following these laws and regulations ensures that the promoter will keep the public's safety at the forefront of all plans. Some communities or states have public agency regulatory oversight of the promoter built into the permit process. For example, the community may have a requirement for the promoter to have adequate contingency plans in place before approving an event.

Relevant Laws or Regulations

Event promoters must usually gain approval from local and sometimes even state, authorities to hold public events. The following information should be available to the promoters before beginning the permit-approval process:

- Identity of the approving authority and any other authorities actively involved in the approval process;
- Relevant statutes, ordinances, codes, and standards existing for mass gatherings;
- Documentation required to support their application; and
- Relevant deadlines for the filing of applications.

Some communities offer a "One Stop Shopping" concept for permitting. The person requesting an event completes applications at one place and the information is forwarded to the appropriate agencies for their approval. The person requesting the event does not have to track down the appropriate agencies to make a request. This also ensures all required agencies are notified and considerations are made before the permit is issued.

Promoters should be aware of the approving authority's timetable for approving events and issuing permits and should include any potential delay in the event planning schedule.

As a condition of granting approval, promoters may be required to provide feedback on the approval process and submit an evaluation before, during, and after the event, as needed. Promoters may be required to give feedback in the form of a debrief or a report to relevant authorities.

Pre-Event Planning

Legal Issues

Some form of legislation usually governs or restricts public events or aspects of them. Some events, particularly extremely large or high-impact events, require special state or local legislation. Local ordinances provide health and medical guidelines.

Promoters should consider obtaining legal advice early in the planning stage. Items that warrant consideration include:

- Liability for injuries;
- Liability for acts or omissions;
- Liability for financial obligations incurred in responding to major emergencies occasioned by the event; and
- Potential liability for the resultant effects of the event on normal emergency operations.

Permits will be required for parades, the sale and consumption of alcohol, and the sale of food items. Fire safety inspections are also required. Permission may also be required if it will be necessary to close certain adjacent or peripheral roads or streets. A permit may be required for the mass gathering itself.

Most public sector agencies have adopted a “User Pays” policy for services provided at sporting and entertainment events. The purpose of this policy is to improve the allocation of statute resources in the general community by providing a means of charging for services deployed to plan for, and respond to, sporting and entertainment events. Event promoters should consult local and state authorities to determine relevant fee structures and charges for services provided, including payment of overtime costs for personnel.

Promoters may be required to post a bond or provide liability insurance to cover the costs of response to emergencies, subsequent venue clean up, traffic and crowd control, and other policing functions.

The head of the planning team must monitor progress made in satisfying all legal requirements throughout the planning stage of the event.

Political Issues

Often communities have to deal with local political considerations when they plan events. No specific advice can be given to the promoter except to warn him or her that political considerations are always important to the local community. Often a way to encourage elected political officials to support an event is to show the monetary or quality-of-life impact a successful event would have on their communities or careers. Explaining the positive impact encourages them to support the public safety coordinators by providing adequate local resources and funding.

EVENT CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT

From time to time, you may need to cancel, postpone, or interrupt an event. If a crowd has already gathered, these actions have the potential to create dangerous crowd reactions. Have plans in place to appropriately manage an angry crowd and to address the possible readmission of patrons to the venue.

One major area to consider is authority to cancel or postpone an event. During the planning phase, the promoter and the planning team must discuss who has the authority to cancel or postpone an event as well as when and under what conditions the event can be postponed or cancelled. These decisions must be made before the event begins, and everyone must know who has authority. ICS is an excellent command system to ensure chain of command and proper approving authority.

Site

You may need to consider a number of alternative venues for an event. Emergency managers may be able to recommend appropriate venues based on health and safety considerations.

Finding a suitable venue or set of venues can be difficult. Answering the following questions during the planning stage can aid in the selection of an appropriate event site:

- Will staging the event require multiple venues?
- Is this kind of event normally conducted at a fixed facility?
- Will a fixed facility be used in ways that may not be considered normal for that facility?
- Is the event regularly conducted at a temporary venue?
- Is the event a “one of a kind” project at a temporary venue?
- What services/utilities are available at the venue?
- What additional services and utilities will be required at the venue?
- Is there a need for backup services or utilities?
- What shelter facilities are available at the following locations:
 - Transport pick-up and drop off areas,
 - Spectator and official viewing areas,
 - Seated eating areas,
 - Pedestrian thoroughfares,
 - First aid and medical centers, and
 - Competitor and officials marshaling areas?
- What is the duration of the event, and will it continue during the hours of darkness?
- Have you provided for the needs of people with disabilities?
- Does the date of the event conflict with other events to be conducted in the area?
- Will seasonal weather require any special contingency planning?
- Have you surveyed the proposed site (particularly outdoor sites) for inherent hazards associated with location, and have any been identified? Do utility lines that could be

Pre-Event Planning

brought down by a severe storm traverse the sight? Is the site adjacent to a waterway prone to flooding?

- Is the site layout such that, in the event of a mass casualty incident, space is available for an onsite triage area to permit stabilizing medical treatment before critical patients are transported to local health care facilities? Is such an area accessible to ambulances to eliminate the need for carrying patients long distances?
- Does the site allow for adequate crowd regulation by means of, for example, existing regimented seating areas or flow barriers?
- Are spectator overflow areas available to prevent crowd crush should spectator turnout significantly exceed expectations, a common phenomenon at rock concerts?
- In an urban setting, as is characteristic of a stadium venue, could the adjacent streets on all sides be closed to other than emergency, service, and resident vehicles, creating a perimeter for access as well as a buffer zone?

Criminal and Terrorist Risks

Each city leader must view his or her community as a target for acts of terrorism and crime. The threat is increasing daily. Often, the more unprotected sites become targets because of their accessibility. For example, terrorists attacked the Federal Building in Oklahoma City because it was vulnerable. Small communities may actually be attractive sites for terrorists because the residents believe they are not at risk and so do not prepare themselves. However, small communities can take steps to prepare for the same risks all communities face.

Prepare public safety personnel to protect themselves. In Tokyo, during the gassing incident in the subway system, responders became ill as a result of their efforts to rescue the original victims. Teach your community's public safety personnel to protect themselves as they help others.

Some events may appeal to terrorists for a number of reasons, including an anniversary date, a particular location, the nature of the event, or those who will be included among the participants. Communities can identify terrorist organizations that may be attracted to their event for any number of reasons and can prepare accordingly. Knowledge is an advantage. Know the possible risks the event poses and the audience such an event will attract. Ensure that your public safety teams are prepared and have practiced their response to terrorism, and suspected terrorism, and that they understand how to mitigate any potential terrorist incidents.

When safety and security professionals formulate contingency plans for potential terrorist incidents, they should work together with state or federal law enforcement intelligence units. Local law enforcement professionals should consult the FBI and state law enforcement intelligence specialists.

Extremist or Single-Issue Groups

If organizers anticipate that a mass gathering or special event will attract the attention of organized groups, they should meet, if possible, with the leaders of these groups in advance. The organizers and group leaders can discuss ground rules of acceptable behaviors and the

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anticipated public safety response to criminal or disruptive behavior by local law enforcement. Building rapport by gaining a mutual understanding of what to expect can decrease the likelihood of disruptive behavior, or at least ensure that everyone knows what will and will not be tolerated.